

Learn it. Do it. Live it!

WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT



Why Law Enforcement?

Community law enforcement agencies such as the local police department or sheriff's office are natural partners to Safe Routes to School efforts and can augment a school's safe routes activities. Law enforcement agencies and SRTS programs all work to encourage safe pedestrian and bicycling behavior, and to find ways for motorists to be part of the safety picture around schools. For example, the Williamsburg Police Department is furthering the City's goal of improving pedestrian and bicycle safety through its work with the school division's Safe Routes to School program. City police officers participate in school SRTS team activities, conduct bicycle safety trainings, and offer a pedestrian and bicycle course for students to practice safe walking and riding.

What can Law Enforcement Do for Safe Routes?

School SRTS programs benefit from law enforcement officers being involved in three basic ways: being present, hosting events, and building positive relationships.

Be present. Police officers and especially school resource officers can be part of the everyday rhythm of school life by simply being present at school. A police officer, sheriff's deputy, or other law enforcement official at the school can be the point of contact for the school and the broader community. Law enforcement officials can:

- Distribute safety materials at public events
- Support a school's Student Safety Patrol
- Give safety presentations at school

Who's Present to Speak about SRTS?

School Resource Officer. School resource officers work in many middle and elementary schools to help with police visibility and presence at school events.

DARE Officer. DARE officers work in elementary schools and can help conduct safety education in a variety of topics during class visits, including pedestrian safety.

Police Bicycle Patrol Unit. Police departments will often have their own bicycle patrol units, used to provide directed patrols in a community. Officers that are part of a bicycle patrol unit receive bicycle training and often conduct bicycle safety trainings for children in the community.



A Waynesboro police officer directs traffic at an intersection nearby Berkeley Glenn Elementary School during the 2014 International Walk to School Day.

As a member of a school's Safe Routes to School team, police officers can offer valuable insights about:

- Transportation issues facing a community
- Local traffic patterns and areas with a high number of traffic violations
- Bicycle and pedestrian crash information

Once the school has a travel plan, the officer can help obtain formal endorsement of the plan by the police department.

Host trainings and events. Law enforcement agencies can contribute to Safe Routes to School efforts in many ways, including engaging in school partnerships or as the lead for:

- Hosting bicycle rodeos
- Participating in School Walkabouts
- Directing motor vehicle traffic during a Walk to School Day or Bike to School Day
- Conducting helmet giveaways
- Training adults to become crossing guards
- Teaching safe driving for adults



✓ **Build positive relationships.** Safe communities are the result of positive relationships between all members – students, teachers, police officers, families, neighbors, etc. – and SRTS provides the opportunity for these members to come together and work towards creating a safer and healthier community through increased walking and biking to school, reinforcing positive relationships. In addition, many parents and school administrators welcome having law enforcement officers pop in from time to time for that added sense of security, knowing that someone is looking out for the safety of the students.

How else can schools and local law enforcement partner on Safe Routes to School?

✓ **Share calendars.** Schools can send their local law enforcement agency a calendar of their planned events, including Walk/Bike to School Days, Crossing Guard Appreciation Day Celebrations, and other events. The calendar will let law enforcement know when the events may affect traffic safety and can act as an invitation for law enforcement to participate in a school activity.

✓ **Consider walking and biking safety.** Include pedestrian and bicycling traffic safety when planning a school or community event, especially if more student families will be walking and bicycling to school. If local law enforcement knows, they may provide additional crossing guards or traffic enforcement for the event.

✓ **Focus on student safety.** Law enforcement can assist with implementation, and can sometimes help acquire funding as well.

✓ **Make safety a part of everyday life.** Schools can make pedestrian and bicycling safety an ongoing activity through education in and out of the classroom, encouragement by parents, and enforcement by the police department.

Virginia Safe Routes to School would like to thank the following law enforcement officials for help in developing this **Learn it. Do it. Live it!** resource:

Chief Neal White, Berryville
DARE Officer Michael Gangloff, Harrisonburg
Officer Timothy Walker, Williamsburg

Safe Routes and Law Enforcement in Berryville



Master Police Officer Terry Fritts installs bicycle lights on children's bikes during a Berryville Bicycle Rodeo

A bicycle patrol unit was the start of successful effort in Berryville to increase walking and bicycling safety. The bicycling unit distributed materials at the local Farmer's Market, worked with the town planning department and the public schools to assess walkability around the primary and middle school, and helped start the Town's SRTS program, including participation in International Walk to School Day.

As a result, the police worked with the school PTO and focused on safety issues for children. Participating in Walk to School Day not only helped encourage students to participate, but also gave the police and teachers an opening to discuss safety education and share the health benefits of walking and biking. This partnership has allowed the police department to work with schools to help promote Safe Routes to School through bicycle rodeos and annual participation in Walk to School Day.

According to Neal White, the Chief of Police in Berryville, "Partnerships are a win-win for the community. A law enforcement agency is an integral part of the community and always looking for ways to promote safety initiatives and engage the community. Schools offer a great audience and tremendous opportunity to foster relationships."

Still have questions? Contact our Local Technical Assistance Coordinators at 1-855-601-7787 or email us at info@VirginiaSRTS.org.